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Febr. 1, 1966

National Advisory Comm.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR IMPROVING EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN RURAL AREAS

Through programs in education and training, we see hope--Operation Hope--to do something about the "lags" which exist between rural and urban residents. Disparities of educational opportunities can now be narrowed because of the cultural enrichment programs and broader curricula activities made available through the new tools provided by the 1st session of the 89th Congress in 1965. In signing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 into law, President Johnson said, "if we have learned anything from our experience, we are learning that it is time for us to go to work, and the first work of these times and the first work of our society is education." He continued, as he signed the Higher Education Act of 1965, "we have felt a fierce commitment," to provide more tools with which to wage a total war against ignorance. Therefore, with the legislation for education now available, we are in "Operation Hope," for all rural America in organizing our resources to attack the lags.

At present, all States have indicated an interest in Title I of ESEA. The funds are allocated to States by counties based on the number of children 5 to 17 years, inclusive in families with incomes under \$2,000. If a county fails to use its allotment, the money goes back to the Federal Government. At the close of 1965, only 3,100 projects had been submitted, obligating only \$310 million of \$1.17 billion authorized for this Title. There are 24,400 operating school districts in the United States. Some States have submitted over 400 projects while others

Report presented by Henry L. Taylor, Chief, Schools, Education, and Training Staff, Program Operations Division, Rural Community Development Service, USDA, at meeting of the National Advisory Committee on Rural Areas Development, February 1, 1966.

have not submitted any. The problems facing local school district personnel are (1) understanding the forms, and (2) knowing what programs are needed. The number of projects submitted could be increased if these problems were discussed community-wide and more technical assistance was available to assist in preparing proposals and requests. The programs are coded and we will be able to recognize those developed for rural school districts.

There are 48 States and territories which have submitted requests for funds under Title V of the ESEA to strengthen State Departments of Education, totaling an outlay of \$14,450,000. This action has created 1,310 jobs at the professional and non-professional levels. State Departments of Education proposals range from pupil personnel services to planning, developing, and evaluating educational programs and research coordination. The largest percentage (26%) of the allotted funds was in the area of the latter activities.

About 47 percent of the public and 50 percent of the non-public elementary school pupils in this Nation are without libraries. Title II carries an authorization of \$100,000,000 for the 1966 fiscal year. To date, 44 States have submitted plans for grants but only 22, totaling between \$50 and \$60 million, have been approved. Plans submitted strongly indicate that rural areas are being favored.

For Title III, Congress appropriated \$75 million for supplementary educational centers and services to: (1) improve education by providing services not now available to children who live there; (2) raise the quality of educational services already offered; and (3) stimulate and assist in the development and establishment of programs to serve as models for the regular school programs. Applications have been received from

47 States totaling 746 projects. Of this number, 216 projects have been approved. A cursory observation indicates that most of the projects submitted are not geared for improving education in rural areas. It might be helpful if you, as members of the National Advisory Committee, suggest to State Departments of Education that inasmuch as they are adding personnel to their departments, that they detail one or two persons who have an interest in rural people and their problems to work with local rural school district officials in preparing proposals under this Title.

The funds allotted to the States under this Title, on the basis of school-age population and total population, are to develop superior new educational ideas among school districts.

In a similar vein, of the 375 compensatory programs which operated in 1965 to provide cultural enrichment activities, tutoring centers, and similar programs for the educationally disadvantaged, were for the most part in large urban areas. For example, there were 53 programs in New York, 34 of which were in New York City; 58 in Illinois, 53 of which were in Chicago. Only 29 programs were conducted in the southeastern States.

Title IV--Educational Research and Training--amends the Cooperative Research Act to authorize \$100 million over the next five years for the construction of national and regional research facilities and additional funds to expand current programs on research and development. Presently, 25 requests are from southern States. They involve cooperative working agreements among several colleges and universities. None have been approved. These regional laboratories are multi-purpose and should reflect pressing school problems within the area.

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 authorized new matching funds to States to expand and upgrade vocational education for high school dropouts or high school graduates preparing to enter the labor market. Emphasis was given to broader and more flexible programs to help workers learn new skills and upgrade old ones.

Under this Act, practical nurse training and area vocational education were given permanent status. The industrial arts program was made available to rural residents. Work-study programs were provided for needy vocational education students. The area vocational schools are rapidly developing throughout the Nation. Work study programs were carried on in approximately 800 schools last year involving \$12 million. Due to a change in qualifications of students for work study programs, a broader utilization of the fund for the work study program is expected during fiscal year 1966. There is a great deal of activity going on in research and demonstration projects. Over 600 project proposals have been submitted. About \$11.8 million was spent on research and demonstration projects in the 1965 fiscal year.

The Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963, amended in 1965, authorized a five-year program of Federal grants and loans for construction or improvement of public and private higher education academic facilities. It also provided for a five-year program for grants and loans to under-graduates and graduate institutions, public junior colleges, and two-year technical schools which could show that they urgently need to expand enrollment capacity and increase capacity for extension and continuing education programs on the campus of the institution. Grant funds were made available for libraries and facilities used for science, engineering, mathematics, or modern language

courses and in other instructional and in research areas. States are making maximum use of this Act. During the fiscal year of 1965, a total of 525 grants were made at a total cost of \$230 million.

There were 117 loans at a cost of \$110 million. Approximately 1200 grants totaling \$460 million will be available in 1966.

The Higher Education Act of 1965 provides a broad base for understanding and solving community problems, strengthening resources of our colleges and universities, and providing financial assistance for students. Titles I, II, and VII must have State plans indicating how the funds will be used.

Title I provides for the resources of colleges and universities to be brought to bear in solving community problems and providing programs and activities designed for awakening community leadership. Such programs should be geared largely to seminars, conferences, and training for community leadership roles and services. The Office of Education is now working on guidelines and will be ready for action as soon as the President completes the appointment of the National Advisory Committee, which is scheduled to be completed by February 8, 1966.

No money was appropriated for Title II, College Library Assistance and Library Training and Research. However, guidelines are being developed for this Title.

Title III is designed to strengthen developing colleges, especially the smaller ones and junior colleges. However, they must be accredited or be recommended by a recognized accrediting agency as making reasonable progress toward accreditation. Such institutions must have been organized five years prior to the academic year for which they seek assistance.

Announcements, guidelines, and other information concerning strengthening developing colleges will be available around February 1, 1966, and will be mailed to all college presidents.

Financial assistance for college students is provided for in Title IV. Any serious-minded student who wants to go to college can do so through grants, college work-study programs, low-cost guaranteed loans, and National Defense Education Act loans. Guidelines for these loans are about ready and will be mailed to States and institutions which have requested them shortly after the first of February. Twenty-one States have met the requirements for student loans. The American Bankers Association has committed itself to play an active and vigorous role in the promotion of this major student assistance program. Most of the commercial banks have agreed to participate.

Although no money was appropriated for the teacher corps, it is possible that funds may become available through a supplementary appropriation. Some guidelines should be out by June, and the program operating by September.

Twenty-six States have made application for Federal assistance under Title V of HEA. The program allows for 4,500 fellowships to be awarded during the 1966 fiscal year. Approximately 200,000 teachers will not qualify for this program because they do not hold the baccalaureate degree.

Title VI provides financial assistance for the improvement of under-graduate instruction through better classroom facilities, laboratory and other special equipment, including closed circuit television equipment for direct instruction. Grants are not available this year to institutions for conducting workshops and institutes for persons who will be using such equipment.

The latest report released by the Economic Research Service of USDA indicates that the rural adult educational level is two years below the urban adult level and that there is a difference in the median income level of \$1,785. Since the level of education influences the level of income, our first attack in closing the disparity in income must be leveled at increasing educational and training opportunities in rural areas. To this end, we are working with the State Technical Action Panel and educational leaders on techniques for informing all rural residents about the educational and training activities resulting from the new and amended legislation in which rural people can participate in raising their educational level and skill competency. There is a great need to work with local school districts, suggesting some programs which may help to raise the educational level of rural people.

We are formulating plans to place on the drawing board a Chairman's Instruction on education aids available to rural residents. In this effort, again we need the cooperation of all agencies in USDA along with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The State Technical Action Panel along with State Department of Education officials must work together in an all-out effort to get information to rural people about all facets of the educational programs and how they can benefit from these programs.

Even though we have talked about available resources to education in general, rural residents can participate in them based upon their knowledge and understanding of these aids. It is our responsibility to see that they are informed and helped. Your assistance will be invaluable to us as we work with them--the rural people of America.

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